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WART

TM





BLACK MERMAID PRODUCTIONS

DART™

BRUCE LOVE
JULIE DITRICH

Story

JOZEF SZEKERES

Art

CHRIS ELIOPOULOS

Letters

IN COLOR

Colors and Film

Color Crew: David Baron, Stephen Brown, Garry Davis, Tom Gerlach, Nick Jenkins,
Gody Khambatta, Dennis Mansfield, Heather Martin, Michael McAuliffe,
Jon Meyer, Ken Ozawa, Zachary Raetz, Jim Poulsen, Jay Van Noy, Naghmeh Zand

Ballon Crew: Steve Troop

Key Grip: Stephen Brown, James Dosch, Tony Morales, Jim Poulsen

Gaffer: Jason Yengst

SCANNED BY



JHFRAIL

ERIK LARSEN

Editor • Dart Creator

JOSH EICHORN

Font of Useless Ideas

GARRETT CHIN

Assistant to the Chief Executive

FOR IMAGE COMICS:

Executive Director

Art Director

Graphic Design

Distribution

Production Manager

Controller

Communications Director

LARRY MARDER

DOUG GRIFFITH

KENNY FELIX

GERMAINE ZACHARIAH

RONNA COULTER

LEE PATIN

KELLY VAN LANDINGHAM

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SHRINK-WRAPPED
ENCLOSED, CUT OFF,
SUFFOCATING...

HEE
HEE HEE
HEE.

...POUNING TEMPLES,
THROBBING HEAD, DYING
LUNGS...

THSSSSLL
GASP!

...SHE HAD FELT THESE
THINGS BEFORE...ANOTHER
TIME...ANOTHER MEMORY...
WHEN SHE WAS ANOTHER
PERSON...

HELP ME, JILL,
FOR GOD'S SAKE,
HELP ME!

YOUR FRIEND
CAN'T HELP YOU,
SHE'S BUSY AT
THE MOMENT.

HEY SPUNKY,
YA DON'T MIND
MAKIN' LOVE TO
THE BOTH OF
US AT ONCE,
DO YA?

COME ON, SWEETIE
PIE, A GUY DOESN'T WASH
HIS ARMPITS AND TAKE OUT A
BLIND DATE TO A QUIET BAR
FOR A BOWL OF CHIPS AND
A BEER AND NOT EXPECT
HER TO COME
ACROSS.

DISEMBODED VOICES
FROM A DISTANT PAST...

THIS IS JILL,
IS ANYBODY
THERE?

...HAUNTING HER...

STOP YOUR
WHIMPERING, NO-
ONE'S COMING
TO HELP.

...PROPELLING HER...

I CAN'T GET
INVOLVED, I'M
TOO SCARED.



NOW THERE'S
NO RUNNING OFF,
SWEETIE, THEM AN'T
THE RULES OF THE
GAME!

...TO FINALLY SEE AND HERE
AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE WAY
THINGS REALLY ARE...

AND FOR ONCE SHE DOES NOT THINK,
FOR ONCE SHE DOES NOT QUESTION,
FOR ONCE SHE DOES NOT FREEZE BUT
ROARS INTO ACTION AS SOMETHING
INSIDE HER ...

...SNAPS.

OOOOH,
THAT'S IT, LET'S
PLAY IT ROUGH,
SWEETIE-BABY!

THEN
THE RULES
HAVE JUST
CHANGED!

AAAAHHHHHH!!!!

I CAN'T
SEE, MY EYES,
I CAN'T SEE!

HELP
ME JILL,
PLEASE...

FROM THE BEGINNING SHE
WAS PART, IT WAS JUST
THAT JILL'S FEAR WAS IN
THE WAY!

BORN TO PARENTS WHO ANSWERED
WITH HITS RATHER THAN HUGS...
WHERE VIOLENCE TOOK THE MOTHER
FROM HER AT THE AGE OF FIVE...
THE INCARCERATED FATHER BEING
THE ONLY FAMILY UNTIL HE TOOK
THAT FROM HER TOO...

EEEEERRR!!

ORPHANED AND INSTITUTIONALIZED,
SHE PRACTICED HER GYMNASTICS
TILL HER HANDS BLEED TO ESCAPE
HER EMOTIONAL REALITY...

...AND AS IS THE WAY, KIDS
GROW UP, AND SOME AMONG
THEM LIKE THE YOUNG JILL
AUGUST HAS NO PLACE TO GO
EVEN INSIDE HERSELF...

...NOT A FOLLOWER NOR A LEADER
BUT A LONER, DRIFTING, UNABLE
TO RESOLVE HER INNER DOUBT...

CRUNCH

AAAAAAHHH!

...BUT FROM TODAY, SHE
SAYS GOODBYE TO FEAR
AND THAT PART OF JILL!

GET AWAY FROM HER, YOU PUNKS!

I'LL FINISH THE BITCH OFF.

OOOOFF!

LEFT BALL IN THE CORNER POCKET.

THWOP!

SNIFF, SNIFF.

IT'S ALRIGHT, IT'S OVER, IT'S OVER. YOU'LL BE OKAY. LET'S REPORT THIS AND THEN GO HOME.

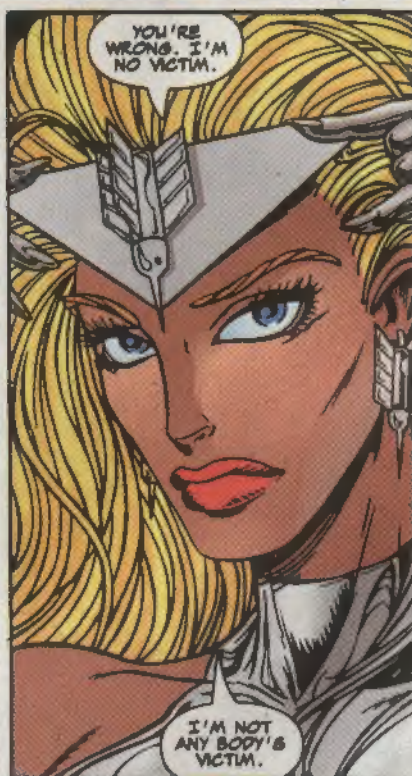
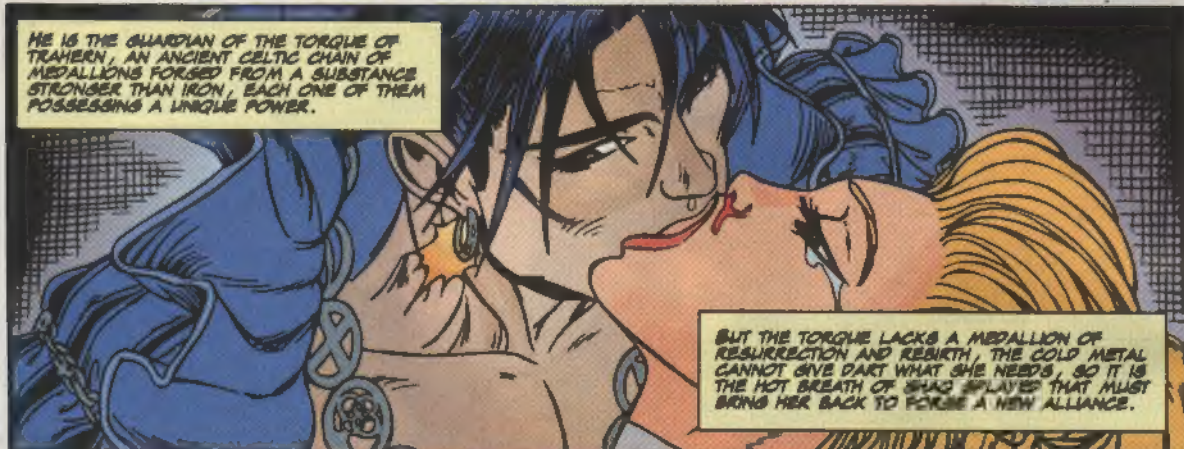
PHIL, WHERE ARE YOU? HELP, MY EYES, HELP! THAT BITCH WHERE IS SHE?

RIGHT HERE. I GUESS THE NEXT TIME YOU TAKE AN UNSUSPECTING LADY OUT, YOU CREEP, IT REALLY WILL BE A BLIND DATE!

YES, SHE HAS ALWAYS KNOWN AND DESPITE WHAT THE TOY MAN SAYS, SHE WAS THE FIRST, SHE WAS THE ORIGINAL, AND SHE WINS NOW EVEN IF SHE DIES, FOR SHE IS...



HE IS THE GUARDIAN OF THE TORQUE OF TRAHERN, AN ANCIENT CELTIC CHAIN OF MEDALLIONS FORGED FROM A SUBSTANCE STRONGER THAN IRON, EACH ONE OF THEM POSSESSING A UNIQUE POWER.





YOU MAY NOT BE, BUT WE'RE VICTIMS. VICTIMS OF GREGORY BROCKMAN. WE HAD A DEAL, WE HAD A CONTRACT, AND HE BROKE IT AND PERVERTED OUR IMAGE AND OUR NAME.

WE'RE BLOOD CHIC, AND NO POOR IMITATIONS CAN TAKE THE PLACE OF THE REAL THING.

YOU'VE CALLED YOURSELVES VICTIMS TWO OR THREE TIMES IN THE LAST HALF-A-MINUTE.

YOU CALL YOURSELF BLOOD CHIC, BUT WHO EXACTLY IS BLOOD CHIC?



MY NAME IS SIRENE, AND I'M LEADER...



"...THIS IS NOYADE..."



"...AND THIS HERE IS DEATH GAZE..."



"...THE FLOATER IS ROSETTE..."



"AND, LASTLY, WE HAVE SHAG SPLAYED..."



MMM, THE STRONG SILENT TYPE. HE MAY BE LAST, BUT BY NO MEANS LEAST. AGAIN, MANY THANKS FOR SAVING MY LIFE, MR SPLAYED.



LOOK PEOPLE, TO WIN THIS THING YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THINKING OF YOURSELVES AS VICTIMS. YOU WANT REVENGE, BUT WITH A LITTLE BIT OF ORGANIZATION, WE CAN ALL EXPOSE BROCKMAN'S TRUE COLORS TO THE WORLD AT LARGE.

LET ME ORGANIZE YOU, LET ME SHOW YOU HOW TO OVERCOME THIS MAN. BUT YOU'LL NEED TO BE PATIENT, AND WE'LL HAVE TO LIE LOW FOR A TIME, MAYBE A LONG TIME.

AND A LONG TIME PASSES FROM FALL TO WINTER, AND AS A SNOWY BLANKET COVERS THE CITY IN A SEASON OF GOODWILL AND GOOD CHEER, THERE IS ONE WHO TAKES MALICIOUS DELIGHT IN HIS CONQUEST AND THE FACT THAT TROUBLEMAKERS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PUSHED INTO OBSCURITY IN THIS HIS GREATEST ENTERPRISE...

TOYS 4 ME

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS, COME CLOSER, CAREFUL NOW, DON'T KROWD THE MEDIA. THAT'S IT, LEAVE SANTA, ALL WE CAN GIVE YOU IS A STOCKING FULL OF STUFF. I'M THE REAL TOY GIVER HERE: I'M THE ONE WHO MAKES YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.





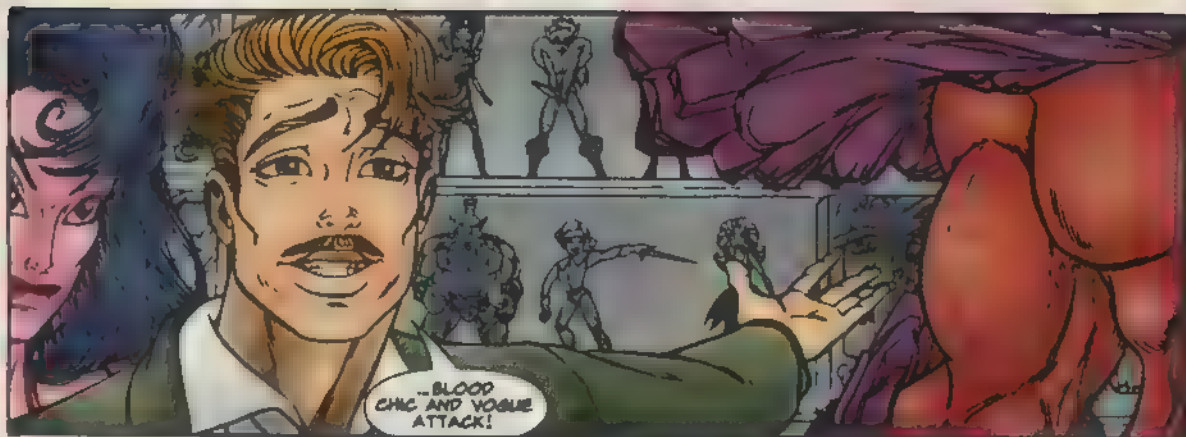
WELCOME ONE AND ALL TO THE GALS TOYS SPECTACULAR EXTRAVAGANZA. THE LAUNCH OF ARE NEW LINE OF ACTION FIGURES.

IT GIVE ME GREAT PLEASURE TO UNVEIL THESE NEW SUPERHERO TOYS, DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED BY MYSELF PURELY FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT.

SO WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, LET ME PRESENT BLOOD CHIC LED BY BAD-GIRL, PART, AND THE SUPER VILLAINS, VOGUE ATTACK LED BY ONE AND ONLY MISTRESS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, MEMBERS OF THE PRESS—I GIVE YOU...

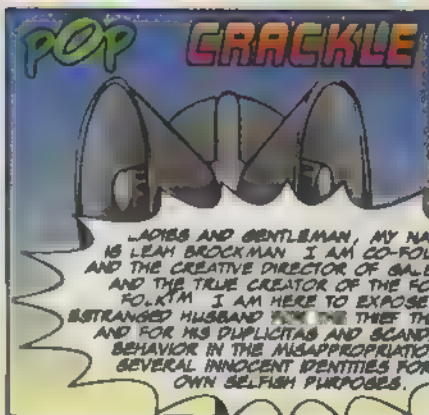
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE



...BLOOD
CHIC AND VOGUE
ATTACK!



WHAT THE...!
FOREST FOLKTM!
IS THIS SOMEONE'S
IDEA OF A BAD
JOKE?



LADIES AND GENTLEMAN, MY NAME
IS LEAH BROCKMAN. I AM CO-FOUNDER
AND THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF GALS TOYS,
AND THE TRUE CREATOR OF THE FOREST
FOLKTM. I AM HERE TO EXPOSE MY
ESTRANGED HUSBAND FOR THE THIEF THAT HE IS
AND FOR HIS DUPlicitas AND SCANDALOUS
BEHAVIOR IN THE MISAPPROPRIATION OF
SEVERAL INNOCENT IDENTITIES FOR HIS
OWN SELFISH PURPOSES.



WHAT? GET THE
CAMERA OUT OF MY
FACE! WAIT... ARE YOU
FROM DONAHUE? NO -
HARD COPY - GET
OUTA HERE.

NO PHOTOS, GET
THOSE CAMERAS AWAY
FROM ME! GET THE FILM,
GET THE FILM!

"BLOOD CHIC CAME TO GALB
TOYS IN ALL INNOCENCE AND WERE
PREYED UPON BY THE MAN I USED
TO CALL MY HUSBAND, AND AS FOR
DART, HE STOLE HER NAME, HE
STOLE HER IDENTITY..."

WHAT ARE YOU
STANDING THERE FOR!
FIND HER AND SHUT
HER UP! SHE'S RUINING
MY BIG DAY!

"...SO LET ME INTRODUCE
THE REAL TRUE ORIGINALS..."

"...DART AND BLOOD CHIC!"

THIS IS
IT GANG,
THIS IS
WHAT WE'VE
BEEN WORKING
TOWARDS
CHOSE YOUR
OPPONENTS
AND GO
FOR IT!

MMMM, I'D GO
FOR IT, IF ONLY WE
COULD TURN METEORITE
TO THE SIDE OF
GOOD.



SPLASH

SNAP

SPLASH

SPT

SPT

POP

SPT

HELP!
HELP!

AAAAAAAH

AND SO THE FIGHT IS ON. IT IS A
SCENE OF MIGHTY DESTRUCTION,
AND THE BEGINNING OF THE END
OF THE SPINNING MALL



Pin-up
By
Jozef
Szekeres







ALRIGHT, BROCKMAN, IT'S SHOWDOWN TIME: JUST YOU AND ME NO LAWYERS, JUST ONE-ON-ONE YOU PICKED THE WRONG WOMAN TO TANGLE WITH I AM BART AND NOTHING YOU SAY OR DO CAN CHANGE THAT

I KNOW YOU, BROCKMAN, I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN YOU THINK I DO.



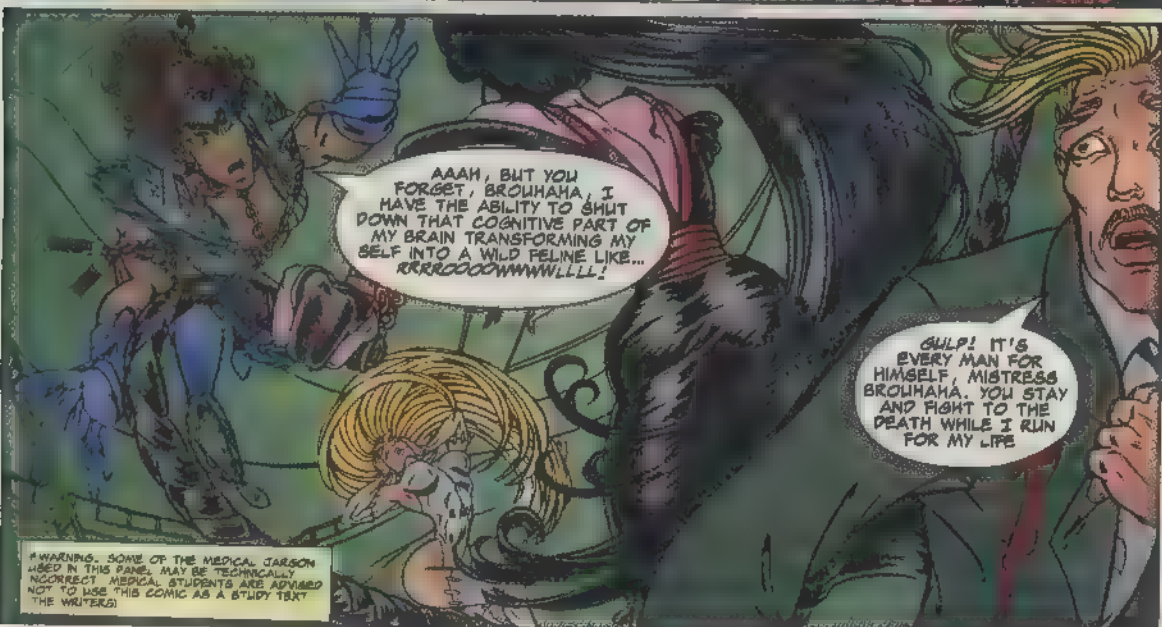
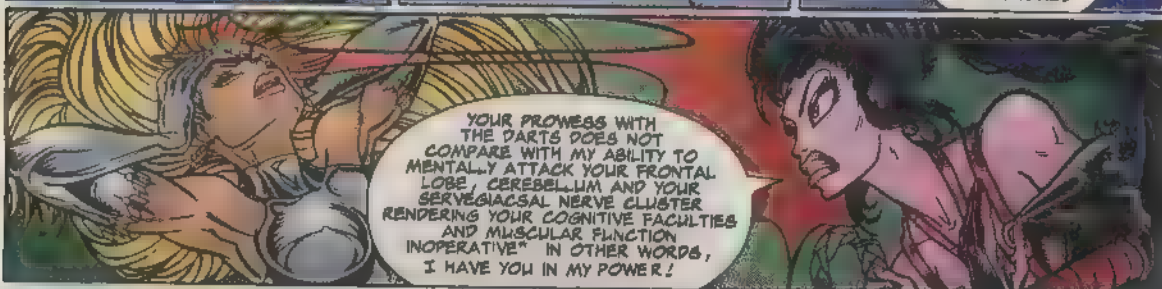
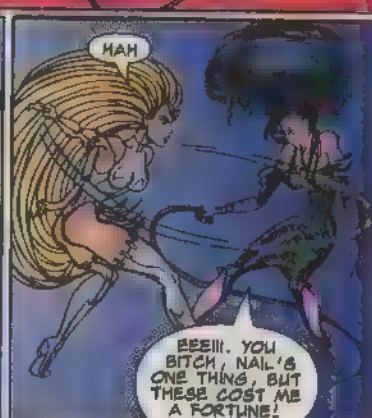
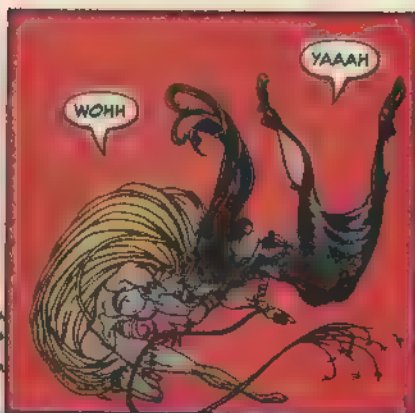
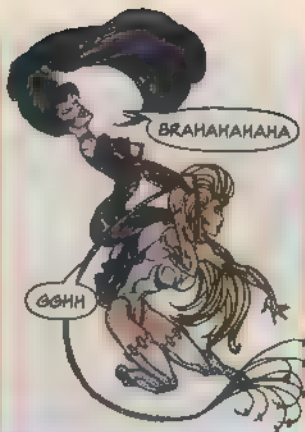
GET OUT THERE, BROUHAMA, AND DO THE JOB I PAY YOU TO DO!

OUCH! YOU'LL PAY FOR THAT YOU CHEAP HUSSY I SHOULD HAVE DISPOSED OF YOU IN THE WAREHOUSE WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE

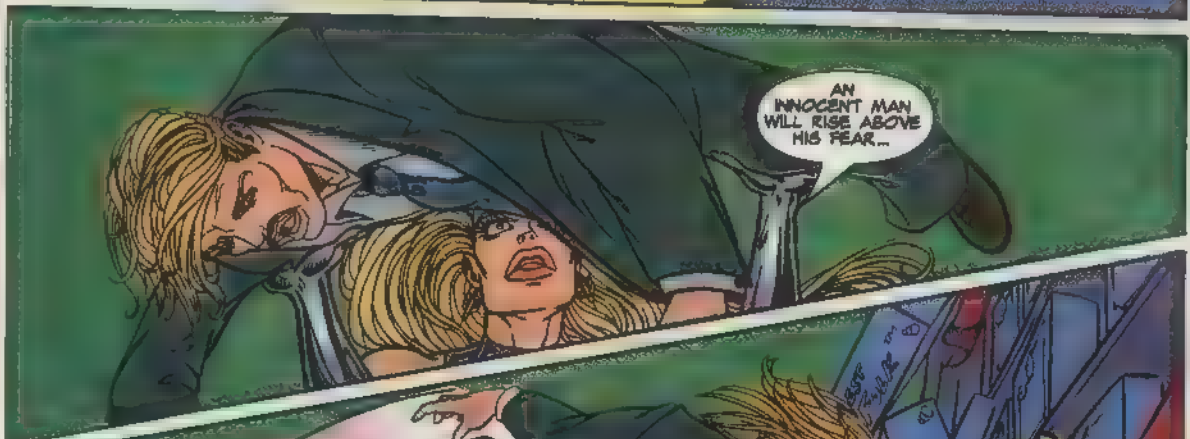
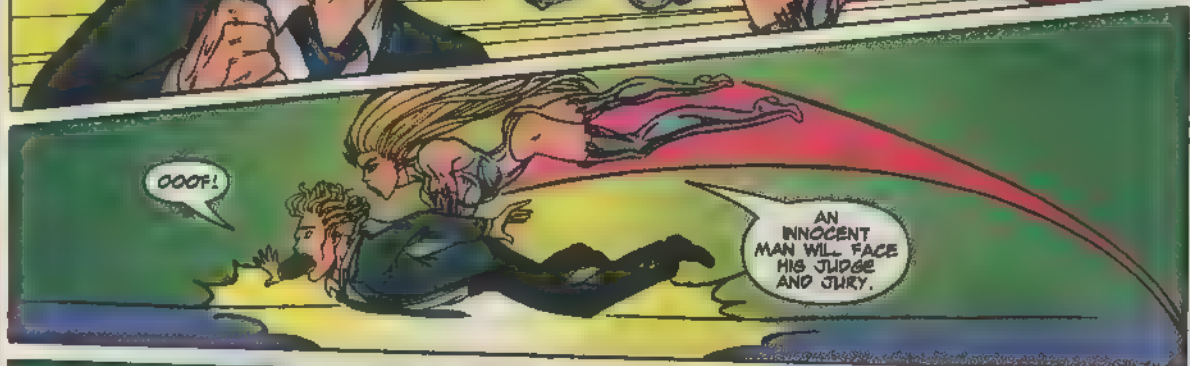
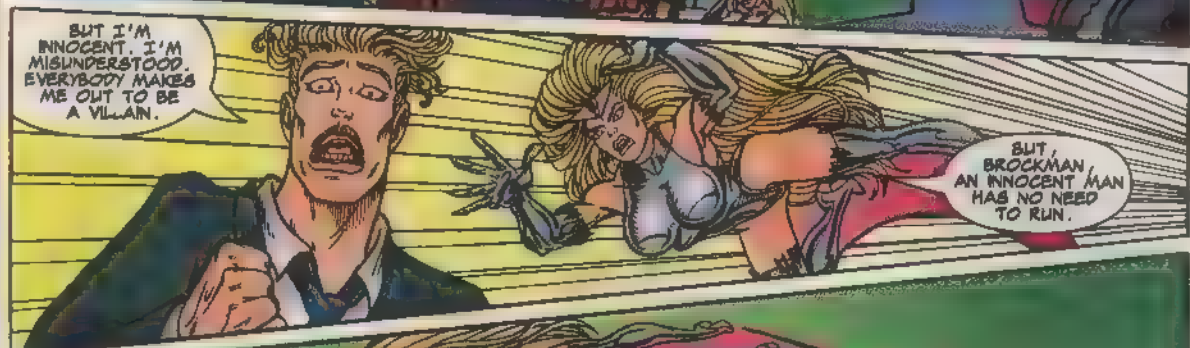
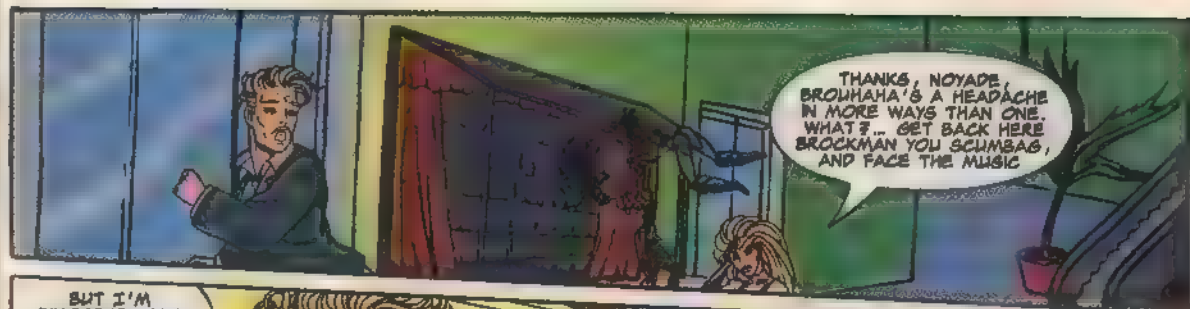
NOW YOU'RE...
AAAAAHGHHHHH

SHUT UP, BROUHAMA, WE'VE NEVER LET A LITTLE PRICK STOP US BEFORE JUST GET IN THERE AND FIGHT.

~~THE~~
SUPER-HERO: YOU BROKE MY NAIL PREPARE TO MEET THY MAKER... BITCH!



*WARNING: SOME OF THE MEDICAL JARSON USED IN THIS PANEL MAY BE TECHNICALLY INCORRECT. MEDICAL STUDENTS ARE ADVISED NOT TO USE THIS COMIC AS A STUDY TEXT (THE WRITER)



HAVING REACHED THE TOP, SIRENE THE SHAPE-SHIFTER, HAS ONLY RESCUE ON HER MIND...

SPLASH

...UNWARE OF THE FOUL BEAST THAT STALKS HER

HEE HEE HEE HEE

AFTERNOON, LITTLE LADY, DO YOU NEED A HELPING TUSK?

KRRRK

AS WALKUS DRAGS HER UNDER, PAIN BEARS THROUGH HER SHOULDER, BUILDING MOMENTUM, LOSING UP INSIDE HER IN A SIREN'S SONIC SCREAM...

COME ON, TEAM, TIME TO SPLIT. THE SEA COW'S JUST DROPPED ONE AND I'VE SWIFT HER FISH BREATH BEFORE

SORRY, DEATH GAZE, I HAVE TO HOT-TAIL IT OUTA HERE WE'LL HAVE TO FINISH THIS LITTLE TUGGLE ANOTHER DAY

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CRRASSH!

SMAAGSHH!

SPLASSHY!

SPLASSHY!

COME ON,
METEORITE, DON'T
TELL ME YOU'RE
NOT INTO WATER
SPORTS.





AFTER THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF HER HUSBAND AND THE OBLIGATORY WAITING PERIOD, FULL DIRECTORSHIP OF GALS TOYS IS GIVEN TO LEAH BROCKMAN WHO SURROUNDS HERSELF WITH TALENT AND RESURRECTS HER FOREST FOLK™ LINE TOYS.

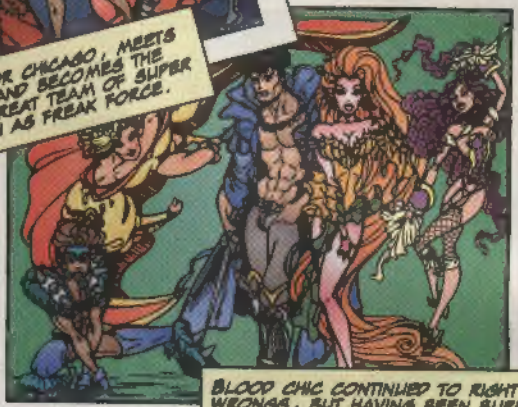
POSTSCRIPT.



KILL-CAT REMAINS THE ONE TRUE FIGHTING FORCE IN DETROIT. HE LATER TEAMS UP WITH KD AVENGER TO FORM THE DEADLY DUO ALWAYS LAMENTING THE FACT THAT DART NEVER GAVE HIM THE TIME OF DAY.



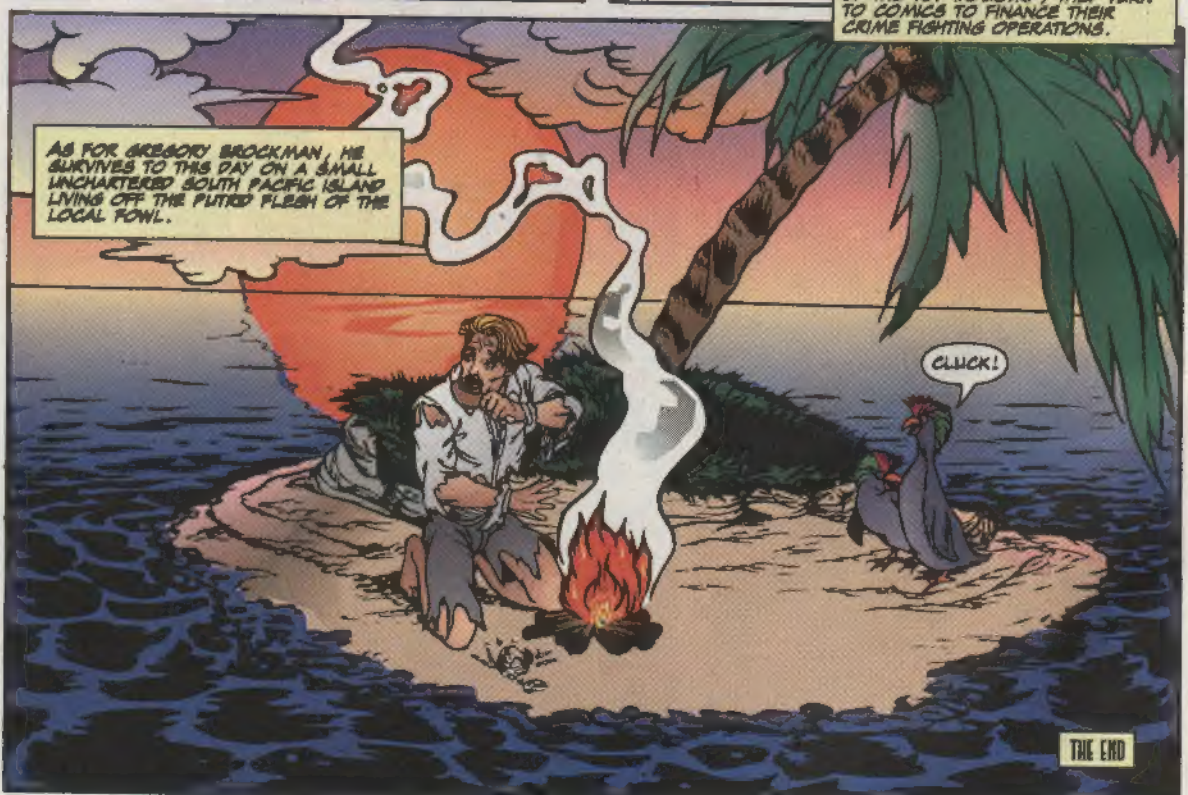
DART LEAVES FOR CHICAGO, MEETS THE DRAGON AND BECOMES THE LEADER OF A GREAT TEAM OF SUPER HEROES KNOWN AS FREAK FORCE.



VOSUE ATTACK SLINK AWAY TO LICK THEIR WOUNDS AND FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.

BLOOD CHIC CONTINUED TO RIGHT WRONGS, BUT HAVING BEEN BURNT BY THE TOY INDUSTRY, THEY TURN TO COMICS TO FINANCE THEIR CRIME FIGHTING OPERATIONS.

AS FOR GREGORY BROCKMAN, HE SURVIVES TO THIS DAY ON A SMALL UNCHARTERED SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND LIVING OFF THE PUTRID FLESH OF THE LOCAL FOWL.



CLUCK!

THE END

THE DART BOARD™

Send letters to: THE DART BOARD, P.O. Box 20760 Oakland, Ca. 94620

I created Dart over 20 years ago. She was introduced in the pages of my unpublished comics that I drew as a kid and other than her costume being altered to eliminate her plunging neckline, she's remained pretty much as I designed her all those years ago.

A lot of the characters that I'm currently drawing were created when I was a kid. The Dragon was one of my first creations and Star, the Deadly Duo and countless others soon followed. When Image started up I could finally use these characters that I'd held onto without having to give over my ownership to somebody else. Dart first appeared at Image Comics in the pages of The Savage Dragon and quickly became one of the most popular supporting characters. That lead to her appearances in Freak Force and later The Deadly Duo. It was only a matter of time before she would wind up in her own comic book.

Image's Executive Director, Larry Marder introduced me to the work of Australia's premiere comic book team, Black Mermaid Productions. I had a long conversation with artist Jozef Szekeres to begin with and he sent over copies of Wave Dancers, a comic book that he'd worked on with his partners, Bruce Love and Julie Ditrach for another publisher. It was terrific. The project was wildly popular but had come to an abrupt halt when they had a falling out with the publisher.

Jozef and I talked about Black Mermaid producing a Dart miniseries and he dashed off a few drawings that were later used for promotional purposes. I was determined that Black Mermaid Productions wouldn't have any of the copyright and ownership problems that they had with their prior publisher so I immediately agreed to let them retain ownership of everything that they created (that is, after all, what Image Comics is supposed to be all about). With everything in place, things started to happen.

I let Black Mermaid Productions have free rein to concoct the ultimate super-heroine book. I gave Bruce, Julie and Jozef the bare bones of an origin for Dart and they turned it into a fully fleshed out story. They added some of their own characters and really went to town coming up with an over-the-top action-packed epic. Bruce Love and Julie Ditrach wrote an outrageous story with surprising twists and turns on every page.

Jozef had painted Wave Dancers but was anxious to give pen and ink a shot and see what could be done with computer coloring. We ran into some problems with the first issue when the people I'd hired to do the color completely fumbled the ball and In Color was called in to clean up their mess and get the book out on time.

This is the first Image comic that I've put out in which I had very limited involvement. Readers used to seeing my mark on my books may find Dart a bit jarring but that's just fine with me. I'm not a studio and I'm not trying to produce scads of cookie cutter comics that all look and read the same. There will be more of the same. Bodycount, a series that is also coming out through my corner of the Image universe was written and drawn by Kevin Eastman and Simon Bisley, Big Bang Comics is put together by Gary Carlson and Chris Ecker and then there's A Distant Soil by Colleen Doran. They're all decent funnybooks and well worth your support.

I'd like to thank Black Mermaid Productions, artist Jozef Szekeres, writers Bruce Love and Julie Ditrach for their efforts, Chris Eliopoulos for his always awesome lettering and the gang at In Color for their marvelous colors. And lastly, I'd like to thank you, the readers, who supported all of our efforts and made this comic what it is!

-Erik Larsen